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AUTHOR Jewell, Jacqueline; Phelps, Amy; Kuhnen, Donna
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ABSTRACT

To alleviate the problem of non-engaged readers in first grade classrooms, a program was developed to motivate and support children's love of reading. The targeted population consisted of three first grade classrooms located in three diverse communities in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. The problem was documented through data revealing the level of reading engagement in the classroom, motivation of students to use reading materials, and amount of parental involvement. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students did not choose reading as a preferred activity. Faculty members reported that students chose activities in the classroom that were not reading-related and they did not show confidence as readers. Parent surveys reported that all children did not have access to public library facilities. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of three major categories of intervention: improved classroom libraries; development of motivational reading activities to be used at home; and facilitation of reading partnerships between students and parents. Post-intervention data indicated a marked increase in student attitudes toward reading, including: choosing reading during free time; reading many books; and listening attentively during reading time. (Contains 5 tables of data, 3 figures, and 19 references; various sample forms (parent surveys, student surveys, and information and activities samples) are appended.) (Author/CR)

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IMPROVING READING ENGAGEMENT IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

Jacqueline Jewell
Donna Kuhnen
Amy Phelps

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SIGNATURE PAGE

This project was approved by

Priscilla Hartwig Ed. D.
Advisor

Sara Moser Patricia E. Wengrovius
Advisor

Beverly Gulley
Dean, School of Education

ABSTRACT

In order to alleviate the problem of non-engaged readers in first grade classrooms, a program has been developed to motivate and support children's love of reading. The targeted population consisted of three first grade classrooms located in three diverse communities in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. The problem was documented through data revealing the level of reading engagement in the classroom, motivation of students to use reading materials and amount of parent involvement.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students do not choose reading as a preferred activity. Faculty members reported students choosing activities that were not reading-related in the classroom and not showing confidence as readers. Parent surveys reported that all children did not have access to public library facilities.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of three major categories of intervention: improved classroom libraries; development of motivational reading activities to be used at home; facilitation of reading partnerships between students and parents.

Post intervention data for the observed students indicated a marked increase in student attitudes toward reading including: choosing reading during free time, reading many books, and listening attentively during reading time.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

First grade students exhibit a lack of engagement in the reading process. This is evident by teacher observation of student behavior, reading skills assessments, and student as well as parent surveys. This problem will be addressed at three different schools, located in three different communities.

Immediate Problem Context

Site A

School A is a two-story brick building built around 1953. The facility is in generally good condition and is adequately maintained. The neighborhood surrounding the school consists of older homes and apartments.

This district employs 45 staff members in school A. The staff consists of: 14 classroom teachers, a music teacher, an art teacher, 2 physical education teachers, a principal, a reading implementor, a curriculum implementor, a student support specialist, a Title I reading teacher, 2 tutors, a nurse, a speech therapist, a learning disabilities teacher, a secretary, a parent liaison, 2 custodians, 3 lunch aides, 6 teacher aides, 2 kindergarten aides, 2 Success For All aides, and a library aide.

School A has a total enrollment of 233 students in grades pre-kindergarten

through sixth grade. The ethnic statistics are 23.2% Caucasian, 70.8% African-American, 5.6% Hispanic, and 0.4% Native American. The average class size is 21. Attendance at the school is 89.7% with a chronic truancy rate of 5.3%. Low-income students, defined as those students from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced priced lunches, comprise 87.1% of the population. The student mobility rate is 54.4%.

The program at school A includes: math, social studies, science, language arts, writing, drama, dance, and arts integration. A special reading program called Success For All has been implemented at the school. This program was developed at Johns Hopkins University.

A program that is part of Success For All is called Family Support. The support group meets bi-monthly to discuss problems teachers are having with children. The parent liaison and student support specialist go to the homes of the children to discuss problems the children are having and what the school can do to help them. Every month at least one activity is held to get parents involved in the school program. Through Title I, the school has a Math Make It and Take It Day. The teachers strive for 100% parent contact. Teachers not only set up conferences at school, but they will contact parents at home also. Faculty members also go into the projects to reach parents who do not have a phone or car.

School A is located in the center of a large city. The school community is considered urban. There are many businesses located near the school. In addition to gas stations and restaurants, the public safety building is nearby. During the school

year 1997/98 this school will change in population. The school will have two classes per grade, kindergarten through grade sixth, with the court ordered preferred choice enforced.

The Surrounding Community

Site A

The school district in which School A is located services 26,752 students. The racial and ethnic statistics are: 62.5% Caucasian, 26.2% African American, 8.2% Hispanic, 2.8 % Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2% Native American. Low income students comprise 39.3% of the district's population, and 4.2% of the district's students are of limited English proficiency. The district has an attendance rate of 91% with a chronically truant rate of 8.8%. Student mobility rate for the district is 20.7 %. The average class sizes in the district are: kindergarten, 21.3; first grade, 22.1. The operating expenditure per pupil is $6,803.

In May, 1989, a plaintiff group called People Who Care filed a desegregation lawsuit against the school district. This lawsuit alleged a long-standing, system-wide practice of racial discrimination and segregation by the district. The second interim order that resulted from that legal action was instituted by a federal judge to provide for school arrangements and related institutional changes that affect the education of the public school children of the district. Within the context of this action, certain schools were designated as serving low-income or educationally disadvantaged students. The judge directed that special local, state, and federal funds would be targeted for use in improving these schools. School A falls into the categories included in the order. The recent decision handed down in 1994, finds guilt on the part of the district and continues

to impact the children's education.

In the larger context, school A is located on the west side of the city, which is the second largest city in the state with a population of 140,000. The city was founded by Swedish and Italian immigrants, and became a manufacturing hub. Machine tools, fasteners, and furniture were three principal industries. Immigrants continue to play an important role in the society. Today Hispanics represent 3.4% of the population, Asians represent 1.0%, African Americans represent 7.1%, and the Caucasian population is 90.0%. The educational level of the adults is varied: 8.3% completed less than grade 9; 15.3% completed between grade 9 through grade 12 without receiving a diploma; 36.1% are high school graduates; 18.7% attended some college; 6.0% received associate degrees; 10.7% received bachelor's degrees; and 4.9% received graduate or professional degrees. The median household income is $31,768.

Immediate Problem Context

Site B

The target school in this district, school B, is one of three in this northern Illinois school district. There is a middle school which services the sixth through eighth grade students, an upper grade school which services third through fifth grade, and the target school which services prekindergarten through second grade. The district's operating expenditure per pupil is $4,251. It is one of four elementary districts that graduates students to a community high school (School Report Card, 1996).

The school was originally built in 1850 and two additions have been added to expand the facility. In 1995 a referendum was passed to build the upper grade school and improve the primary grade school. These improvements are in the process of being

accomplished.

The school has 44 staff members. The staff consists of: 17 classroom teachers, a physical education teacher, an art teacher, a music teacher, an inclusion facilitator, a Title 1 reading teacher, a speech therapist, two reading aides, eight part-time inclusion aides, three part-time recess aides, a part-time librarian, two custodians, a nurse, two secretaries, and a principal who also is the assistant superintendent of the district. Nine of the classroom teachers have obtained their Masters Degree, and five more are currently enrolled in Masters programs. The teachers and staff in the building are 100% White. The teacher's salaries range from $22,152 to $43,452. The services for students with special needs are met through the Winnebago County Special Education Cooperative. This organization provides the district with part-time psychological, social, physical therapy, and occupational therapy services.

The student population is not diverse and is rapidly growing. There are 390 students at the school. The ethnic statistics are: 97.7% White, 0.5% Black, 1.0% Hispanic, 0.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.0% Native American. The average class size is 18.2 to 23.5 depending on grade level. The percentage of students from low-income families is 4.6%. English is the primary language spoken in 100% of the households. All of these characteristics lead to a homogeneous student population (School Report Card, 1996).

The students are instructed through traditional methods that are updated and adapted on a cyclical time schedule. In 1993, the school purchased the Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich reading series. In 1994 the district started putting computers in the classrooms. The first grade received their computers in 1996. In 1996, the Scott

Forsman science series was purchased. In 1997, the district will begin looking at the materials available to update math. The students receive daily instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. Students also receive art, music, physical education and library instruction by certified specialists, on a five day rotating schedule. The district has been instrumental in the state's efforts to promote inclusion for all students. In 1992, the school had its first inclusion student, and in 1996, the school had nine fully included students in kindergarten through second grade. The school district received an award of excellence from the state for its inclusion efforts in 1996.

The district has a very involved Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO generates a large cash flow through various fund raisers. Therefore, the PTO is able to provide funding for teachers' mini-grants, field trips, guest speakers, and special supplies that they feel will enhance the educational atmosphere for the students. In 1992, the Parent Resource Group was developed to aid the teachers in projects, copying, cutting out materials for student projects, and supervising parent involvement in the classroom. Parents were also involved in their own children's education. Teachers reported having contact with 100% of their student's parents. The Elementary Education Foundation was formed by members of the community to provide funds, other than those from the tax base, to enhance the educational opportunities for the schools, as well as strengthen the partnership between the schools and the community.

The Surrounding Community

Site B

The school is located in a small, suburban, middle class community in northern Illinois. The district serves an approximate area of 50 square miles. The 1992 census of the local community revealed a population of 2,928, and due to the rapid growth, a new census was done in 1996 that showed an increase to 4,735 people. The district also services parts of satellite surrounding communities within the district boundaries.

The community has a variety of local employment opportunities, but many residents commute for employment to major cities north and south of the community. The community's industry includes Woodward Governor, a manufacturing company; Taylor Company, a food service machine company; and Sonoco Products, a paper recycling company. There are also a wide variety of small businesses evidenced by the 100 registered members of the Chamber of Commerce. The educational level of adults is varied: 11% have not completed high school; 33% completed high school; 33% completed up to 3 years of college; 22% completed 4 or more years of college. The ratio of white collar to blue collar workers is about two to one. The median household income is $35,078, and an average of 2.67 people live in each household.

Immediate Problem Context

Site C

School C is one of three buildings in a southern Wisconsin district. The district was formed in 1982 with the consolidation of three school districts, the targeted school district and two kindergarten through grade five districts. The district serves an area of 112 square miles. The district currently consists of an elementary school, serving

grades pre-school through grade four, a middle school serving grade five through grade eight, and a high school. The middle school is seriously overcrowded and an alternative site to house grade five, may need to be accessed before classes begin in the fall of 1997. The three schools are located within several blocks of each other.

The district employs 66 people who work in various capacities in the elementary school. Thirty-one are full time teachers including a speech therapist, and music, art, and physical education specialists. There are also two full-time librarians on staff, two part-time teachers, a part-time health teacher, one guidance counselor, and the principal. The school shares the services of: the district nurse, gifted and talented coordinator, one full-time and one part-time psychologist, two physical therapists and one occupational therapist. Also on staff at the elementary school are six custodians (one full-time), two cooks, and two secretaries. Working as support staff are two kindergarten aides, and six full-time and four part- time special education aides. None of the employees in the building are members of a minority population.

The elementary building serves children in the Early Childhood Program through the fourth grade. A total of 450 students age three through ten attend this building, which has a small minority population. The minority statistics are: 0.8% Afro-American, 0.6% Asian, and 1.7% Hispanic. The school also has a small population of migrant students who start the school year in August, move south at the end of October, and often return in May (approximately three to five students). The average class size is 19 students. Five of the first through fourth grade classrooms are inclusion rooms having students classified as learning disabled and physically handicapped. The operating expenditure per pupil is $6,857.

The district is well known for its special education programs. The Early Childhood Program (Pre-Kindergarten) is housed at the elementary school. There are currently 12 students enrolled in 4 class sections taught by certified teachers, as well as classroom aides. These students are identified at kindergarten screening, by outside parent referral, and by Tender Loving Care Learning Center or Birth Center referrals.

A Junior Primary class is also available for children who have completed kindergarten, but need additional learning experiences to help develop a good foundation in the basics before moving on to first grade. These students are not identified as learning disabled and are taught by a certified classroom teacher who is assisted by an aide. The Junior Primary Program currently serves 13 students.

All kindergarten through fourth grade students are in self-contained classrooms and receive daily instruction in: math, reading, science, social studies, and language arts. Students receive: art, music, physical education, health and library services weekly on a rotating basis from certified specialists. Enrichment math, language arts, visual arts, and music are offered as part of the elementary program for gifted students. Adaptive physical education is also available for children who need this service. The elementary school also has a Chapter 1 remedial math teacher. A reading specialist serves the school to provide diagnostic and prescriptive programming for remedial as well as accelerated readers. Additional support is provided through the elementary special education staff assigned to the building for: speech, learning disablities, emotional disabilities, cognitive disabilities, occupational therapy , and physical therapy. Gifted and talented children are served by the district coordinator with specialized pull-out programming as well as classroom programming.

The elementary school has a parent support organization called the Home and School which holds various fund raising activities that involve the parents, teachers, students, and community. The money raised is put back into the school to purchase items that will benefit the students in the school. Support is also available when needed from the district Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

In 1991, the Golden Apple Program (GAP), a volunteer group, was organized to give help to the classroom teachers. These volunteers activities include: listening to children read, helping with classroom assignments, doing copying, cutting, laminating, typing, and many other helpful jobs. The GAP affords many of the community's senior citizens an excellent opportunity to spend one-on-one time with a child.

The Surrounding Community

Site C

The village and rural area that surround this southern Wisconsin school district have a population of approximately 2,000 people. The district serves the village population, as well as students from seven surrounding rural communities. Major employers in this area include: Scot Forge, a manufacturer of open die steel forgings; the DeLong Company, an agribusiness; Meadow Park Nursing Home; Dairyland Research International, a seed company; as well as other agricultural concerns. The statistics for the educational levels of the adult population are unavailable, but the majority of the adults have received their high school diploma or higher.

According to the 1990 census, 66.5% of housing units in the village are single family homes, while 33.5% are duplexes or apartments. Over half (65%) of all units are occupied by the owner of the unit (Feustel, 1992). The number of new families moving

into the school district has not caused a problem in the past, but may be a concern for the future. This is a primarily rural community east of Beloit, Wisconsin and north of Harvard, Illinois, where a new Motorola plant is being built. The district acknowledges a potential growth problem.

There is currently a problem district-wide with lack of available space. At the present time, all available space is being used, and crowded conditions exist at the elementary school. The 73 year old middle school is well over the recommended enrollment numbers, with students being taught in closets and old locker rooms. It is difficult at best to offer programming to the district's physically challenged students. A referendum to build a new high school, remodel the existing high school into a middle school, and make needed changes at the elementary school was defeated in 1996. The referendum was brought back to the voters on April 1, 1997. The referendum was again defeated. It is difficult at this time to gauge the impact this will have on the elementary school in the next school year.

National Context of the Problem

One of the greatest challenges a teacher faces is motivating students to engage the cognitive processes necessary to acquire literacy skills. Even the brightest children will have difficulty and will not become engaged in classroom activities without being intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation sustains long-term learning by encouraging curiosity, social interaction, and problem solving.

Through the use of far-reaching questions, children can ask themselves:

- Can I do the task assigned? (Positively motivated students are very self-assured of their reading competence.)

-Do I want to do the assigned task and why do I want to do it? (This brings to light the concern of intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards.)

"Intrinsic motivations appear to be imperative to lifelong, voluntary reading. Students who read frequently and widely are pursuing personal, internalized goals" (Guthrie & Sweet, 1996, p. 661). Intrinsically motivated students are very competent at finding literature to read, finding large amounts of time for reading activities, and coping with distractions that may arise.

The ultimate goal is the joy or pleasure derived from reading various types of literature. Adults often consider children who "bark at print" (Healy,1990, p.26) to be successful readers, but they may not be engaged and deriving meaning from what they are reading. Intrinsic goals are met when students are engaged in the reading process. These goals center on personal satisfaction. Self-esteem and self-confidence occur when these goals are met, resulting in success in reading and a desire to read more. Through the use of intrinsic goals, students are directed toward independence of thought and classroom interdependence (Winograd & Gaskins, 1992).

Students who have more access to books read more than those who do not. If one cannot afford books at home or obtain access to a public library they do not have a source for good literature (Winograd & Gaskins, 1992). Students who are not surrounded by print and do not see engaged reading modeled by adults in the home, tend to be non-engaged readers.

Healy (1990) summarizes the national context of the problem of the non-engaged reader as follows:

To read well, minds must be trained to use language, to reflect, and to persist in

solving problems. Students may learn to sound out words, but unless they possess the internal sense of responsibility for extracting the meaning, they are engaging in a hollow and unsatisfying exercise (p.25).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document parental involvement and student attitudes towards reading, parent as well as student surveys were conducted. The results were then tabulated and sites A, B, and C were described.

A survey was distributed to parents regarding their family reading habits during free time (Appendix A). A summary of the results is presented in table one.

Table 1

Parent Survey Summary

	Site A n=18			Site B n=15			Site C n=16			Total % n=49		
QUESTION	F	S	N	F	S	N	F	S	N	F	S	N
1. My child enjoys reading.	5	13	0	11	3	1	12	4	0	57%	41%	2%
2. My child chooses to look at a book during free time.	3	14	1	3	12	0	6	10	0	24%	74%	2%
3. Our family uses the public library.	1	11	6	6	9	0	8	7	1	31%	55%	14%
4. I like to read for enjoyment.	6	10	2	10	5	0	9	5	2	51%	41%	8%

* F=Frequently S=Sometimes N=Never

Site A

All of the parents at site A returned the parent surveys. Overall, the majority of the parents and children enjoy reading sometimes. Only one-third of the parents choose reading as an activity for enjoyment; this may indicate a lack of modeling of engaged reading for their children. This is further supported by the response to the library use question. One-third of the families report never using the library.

Site B

In contrast to site A, the parent surveys were returned by only 75% of the parents at site B. This may reflect the other 25% lack parent interest in school and/or the reading process. Two-thirds of the parents perceived themselves as frequent readers. This is not transferred to overt actions, for only about one-third of the families report using the library frequently. One-third of the students were reported as never choosing books during free time which may emphasize the lack of engaged reading.

Site C

The parent response at site C was similar to that of site B. The parent surveys were returned by 70% of the classroom parents at site C, leaving 30% that may be uninterested in school and/or the reading process. Parents perceived themselves and their children as enjoying reading. Yet, reading is not a frequent choice among children during free time. Only one-half use the public library frequently. This further emphasizes the lack of modeling in the home setting.

The data on the three sites were combined and figure one illustrates the summary in percentages.

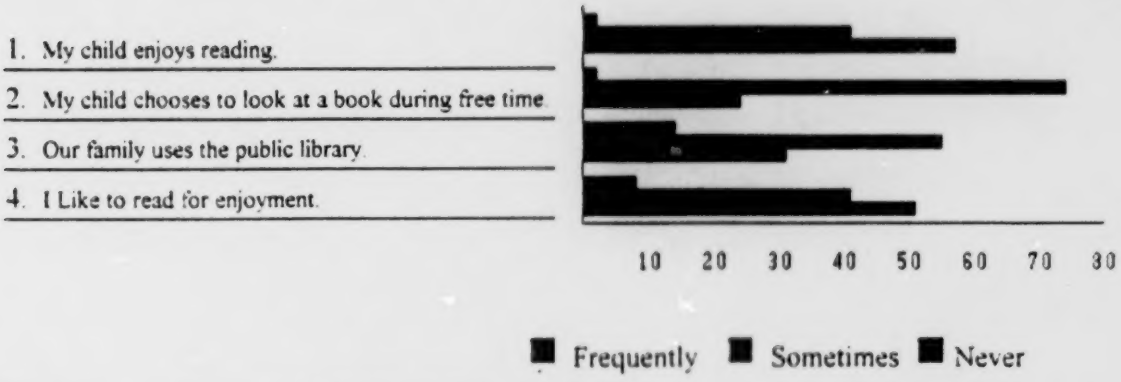
1. My child enjoys reading.
2. My child chooses to look at a book during free time.
3. Our family uses the public library.
4. I Like to read for enjoyment.
10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
Frequently
Sometimes
Never

Figure 1. Summary of children's reading survey.

Students were surveyed concerning their reading attitudes (Appendix B). A summary of the results is presented in table two.

Site A

Overall, the students' attitudes towards reading were positive. Fewer students enjoy reading for the teacher and at home, than those who enjoy reading with a friend. Yet, all but one have positive feelings about how they read. Almost half of the students express a concern about how the teacher feels when they read, which may explain why they do not enjoy reading for the teacher.

Site B

The students at site B also had positive feelings toward reading, but they were less positive in the classroom reading setting. Over half of the students do not have positive feelings about reading time at school, yet all but one student enjoy being read to at school and home. This may be because being read to is non-judgmental while reading time at school may be perceived as judgmental by the children. The students feel good about how they read, yet almost half of them do not feel good about the teacher's perception of their ability to read.

Table 2

Students Reading Survey Summary

Questions:

1. How do you feel when your teacher reads you a story? ☺ 😐 ☹
2. How do you feel when your class has reading time? ☺ 😐 ☹
3. How do you feel when you can read with a friend? ☺ 😐 ☹
4. How do you feel when you read out loud to a teacher? ☺ 😐 ☹
5. How do you feel when you read out loud to someone at home? ☺ 😐 ☹
6. How do you feel when someone reads to you at home? ☺ 😐 ☹
7. How do you feel when someone gives you a book for a present? ☺ 😐 ☹
8. How do you feel when you read to yourself at home? ☺ 😐 ☹
9. How do you think your teacher feels when you read out loud? ☺ 😐 ☹
10. How do you think your family feels when you read out loud? ☺ 😐 ☹
11. How do you feel about how well you can read? ☺ 😐 ☹

	Site A (N=21)			**Site B (N=20)**			**Site C (N=23)**			**Total in % (N=64)**		
Qust.	☺ H	😐 M	☹ S	☺ H	😐 M	☹ S	☺ H	😐 M	☹ S	☺ H	😐 M	☹ S
1	19	0	2	19	0	1	19	3	1	89	5	9
2	15	3	3	9	9	2	13	10	0	58	34	8
3	18	2	1	16	4	0	21	2	0	86	12	2
4	14	2	5	10	8	2	13	3	7	58	20	22
5	12	3	6	14	2	4	20	3	0	72	12	16
6	19	0	2	19	0	1	20	3	0	92	4	4
7	21	0	0	17	3	0	19	4	0	89	11	0
8	17	0	4	16	2	2	15	6	2	74	13	13
9	9	5	7	11	4	5	19	3	2	61	17	22
10	14	2	5	16	3	1	18	4	1	75	14	11
11	20	0	1	19	1	1	19	2	2	90	5	5

Site C

At site C, the positive feelings toward reading are also evident in student responses. The majority of the students enjoy reading with a friend, but one-third do not like to read to themselves at home. This may mean that they enjoy the social aspect of the activity, but not the actual reading. While the majority of students feel the teacher responds positively when they read out loud, almost one-half do not view reading out loud as a positive experience

Even though the students at all three sites have positive feelings about their reading experiences, they do not tend to feel their teacher views their reading positively. The fact that only 58% enjoy reading time at school may reveal a lack of engagement in the reading process. An alarming 42% of the students do not have positive feelings when reading out loud to a teacher and 28% have them about reading aloud at home. Even more students, 39%, feel their teacher has ambivalent or negative feelings about their reading. All of these issues need to be resolved in order to bring about engaged reading for students. An amazing 90% of the students have positive feelings about how they read. Why then do they have so many negative feelings connected to various reading experiences? This may imply that the ambivalent or negative issues can be reversed.

The classroom teachers completed a Reading Engagement Teacher Checklist (Appendix C) for each of the students in their classroom. The results were tabulated and are presented in table three.

Table 3

Reading Engagement Teacher Checklist

	Site A n=21		Site B n=20		Site C n=23		Total in % n=64	
	Yes	no	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Emergent Reading Skills								
A Recognizes speech/print relationship	11	10	16	4	16	7	67.2%	32.8%
B Understands concepts of letter/words	18	3	18	2	17	6	82.8%	17.2%
C Handles books appropriately	15	6	15	5	23	0	82.8%	17.2%
Attitudes Towards Reading								
A Chooses reading during free time	12	9	2	18	11	12	39.1%	60.9%
B Reads many books/stories	11	10	3	17	1	22	23.4%	76.6%
C Listens attentively to stories	14	7	9	11	16	7	60.9%	39.1%
Reading Interests								
A Has favorite books/stories	12	9	9	11	23	0	68.8%	31.3%
B Discusses favorite books/stories	12	9	9	11	2	21	35.9%	64.1%
C Participates in discussions about books/stories	12	9	9	11	19	4	62.5%	37.5%
Reading Skills/Strategies								
A Comprehends what is read	10	11	4	16	23	0	57.8%	42.2%
B Shows confidence as a reader	7	14	5	15	6	17	28.1%	71.9%

Site A

The majority of students at site A are showing: emergent reading skills, positive attitudes towards reading, and an interest in reading. The majority of the students have not yet developed reading skills and strategies. One-half of the students do not recognize the speech/print relationship or read many books or stories. Slightly less than half do not choose reading during free time and do not comprehend what is read. Perhaps these two issues are related? An amazing one-third of the students do not listen attentively to stories and only one-third show confidence as readers. Perhaps they cannot make a connection to the literature?

Site B

The majority of the students at site B also have developed emergent reading skills, but have not developed the attitudes and reading interest that were seen in site A.

Not surprisingly, even fewer students, less than one-quarter, have developed the reading skills and strategies necessary to become engaged readers when compared to site A. Only one-tenth of the students read many books and stories or choose reading during free time. Slightly less than half have and discuss favorite books and stories. This lack of connection to literature as reported by the teachers further emphasizes the lack of engagement. Approximately one-quarter comprehend what they read and show confidence as readers. Perhaps these two issues are interrelated; if the students could comprehend more maybe they would show more confidence.

Site C

The students at site C are exhibiting emergent reading skills similar to those at sites A and B, but the other three categories had inconsistent responses within each category. While approximately one-half of the students are reported to choose reading during free time, only one student reads many books or stories. Most of the students have favorite books or stories and will participate in group discussion, but few will initiate the discussion. They do not discuss their favorite books or stories. Most students comprehend what is read, but few evidence confidence as readers in the classroom.

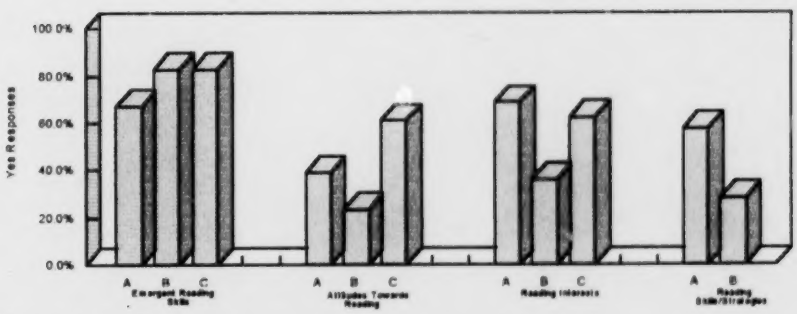

Figure 2. Reading engagement teacher checklist combined results

The general tendencies are evident when the percentages are represented in figure two. The majority of the students exhibit emergent reading skills. At the same time positive attitudes toward reading are not always observed. Without a positive attitude toward reading it may be difficult for the student to develop an interest in reading or show confidence as a reader. This lack of confidence that teachers noted is also evident in the student surveys, further supporting concern. If students lack confidence, they may become less involved in the reading process, hence less engaged.

Probable Causes

The three sites involved in the study are represented by very different populations, hence having similar and different probable causes.

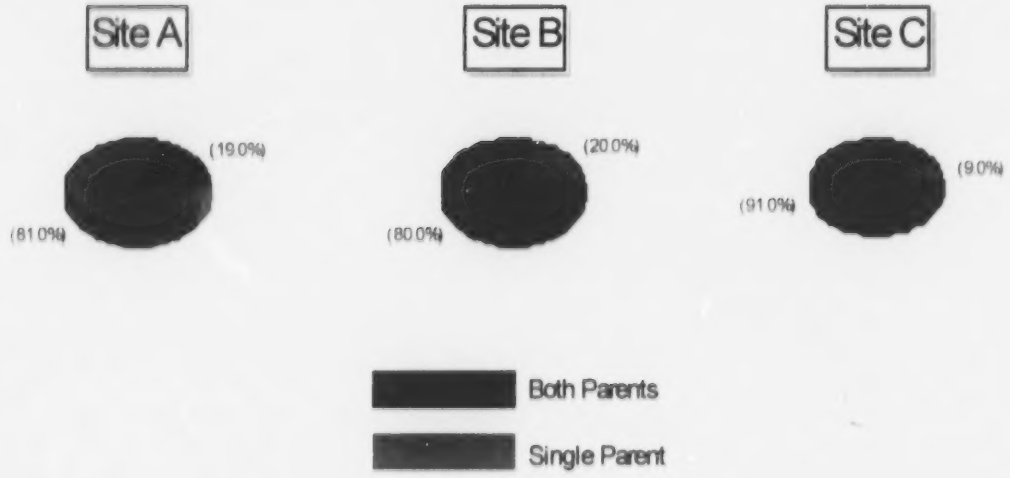

Figure 3 Parental status of students

Site A

Enrollment at site A consists of students from low socio-economic single parent homes. Only 7 out of 21 students have a non-working parent at home. An amazing 81% of the students are living in single parent households as can be seen in figure three. According to parent survey responses only 6% use the library frequently. The resources of the library at site A are not fully utilized, due to the fact that a certified librarian is not available for individualized student consultation. The students have library time for thirty minutes, once a week. This time is utilized to hear stories and pick out books. Not only is the time limited, but the ratio of students to certified staff is not adequate to provide needed guidance in selection of reading material. A decrease of 25% accessibility to the library exists due to the school setting being closed for summer vacation. The limited resources of the library need to be upgraded to meet the needs of the students and staff served by the site A library.

Site B

Site B is a middle class community with a substantial number of adults having attended college. Only 7 out of 20 students have a non-working parent at home. Only 20% of the students are living in single parent households as can be seen in figure three. According to parent survey responses, only 40% use the library frequently. About 50% of the class lives outside of the library district and has to pay for a library card. The school district has three schools, and the only certified librarian is located in the middle school library. The person in charge of the library at site B is a retired teacher working half-time. The students have library time scheduled once a week for 20 minutes. They alternate between checking out two books one week and a story time the

following week throughout the year.

Site C

The probable causes inherent at site C are several. The mobility rate among students is on the rise. As referendums continue to be defeated, morale in the community is impacted. Parents, educators, and administrators alike express concern about maintaining quality education for students while living with temporary solutions. The community is hopeful that another attempt at a referendum will produce funding for a new facility.

The tax caps imposed in the state of Wisconsin in April, 1993, have had a profound effect on funding in all areas. Monies that previously were readily available for extra classroom reading materials, extra literature to be read at home, or materials to assist parents in the education of their children, now need to be secured through the writing of grants. Class sizes are also increasing due to lack of funds. The library is small and has a limited supply of multiple copies of quality literature and lacks the funds for either growth or the replacement of lost books. There is a public library located two blocks from the elementary school. This is not always readily available because of the large area the district covers. The cost of library cards for those not in the library's taxing district can also be prohibitive.

With only a handful of businesses located in the community, many of the student's parents commute to work outside of town. Merely 6 out of 23 students have non-working parents at home. Just 9% of the students are living in single parent households.

The literature suggests several underlying causes for non-engaged readers. The

problem is evident in several contexts. In the community setting, Healy (1990) suggests a decline in the number of books read by the under 21 population. Dr. Bernice Cullinan of New York University reported on a group of typical fifth graders questioned about the average amount of time they spent reading outside of school and found: 50 % read 4 minutes a day or less; 30 % read two minutes a day or less; and 10 % read nothing. The same group averaged 130 minutes engaged in television watching per day (Cullinan, 1987). This emphasizes a departure from engaged reading to engaged television watching. The importance of regular visits to the library cannot be ignored. Students who do not have access to a public library lack the freedom of choice in literature selection. This has been proven to be paramount among causes for non-engaged reading (Winograd & Gaskins, 1992).

Student choice in learning materials greatly increases engagement in the process, hence intrinsic motivation. Reading materials in the classroom setting tend to be teacher-selected throughout all curricular areas, especially those for the chosen reading series, which further limits student choice. Motivators most frequently chosen by teachers are extrinsic, which follows a societal trend toward material gain and away from intrinsic motivation (Winograd & Gaskins, 1992).

The impact of home and family on the reading process cannot be denied. Parents who choose their children's literature can turn the kids off of reading. "Too many believe learning must always be solemn, formal even uncomfortable, like medicine" (Freedman, 1997). This is also discussed by Ohanihan at length in "Education Week" where he states, "If a student ends up knowing Dickens and detesting reading, is he a winner or looser?" (1989).

Another cause for concern is the absence of adults in the lives of children, resulting in decreased time for participation together in constructive activities (Garbarino, 1997). Many parents are involved in extracurricular activities for themselves and their children and working outside of the home. This limits the time available for both parents and children to read. Lack of parental modeling makes it difficult for children to view reading as enjoyable and valuable.

There is a misconception on the part of parents as to how the reading process evolves. Many well-meaning parents think the ability to "bark at print" (Healy, 1990, p. 26) is quality reading. They do not realize that with this comes a lack of metacognitive thought. Deciphering words is only part of the reading process, but it was the primary way that today's parents were taught to read. The process by which people learn affects how they act as adults. Many parents try to help their children learn to read in the same way they were taught, resulting in non-engaged readers.

Some students enter the classroom with limited prior societal and literary experiences, causing them to be unable to form a connection to the literature. They lack exposure to culture and books. This results in the feeling that reading is not real or relevant. Students are not motivated to engage in the sustained cognitive activity necessary to acquire the literacy skills which allow them to relate to the materials (Wigfield & McCann, December 1996/January 1997). Rather than intrinsic, children look for extrinsic rewards when embarking on the reading process because they have not had time to develop an appreciation of reading. Extrinsic rewards such as stickers, stars, and verbal praise focus on the product of a task rather than the process of learning involved in the task. When extrinsic goals are stressed, learning becomes work

rather than the opportunity for creative exploration (Winograd & Gaskins, 1992).

Harold Hodgkinson (as cited by Carbo, 1996) summarized his analysis of demographic trends by saying:

> A decade of educational reform had done little to help the bottom third of our students academically; and the rates of students from minority and impoverished back-grounds who were high-achievers and who went on to graduate from high school and college remain as low as ever. (p. 13)

These are some of the probable causes noted at multiple sites, and in professional literature. The lack of access and choice in reading materials, as well as deficient family support and lack of knowledge, inhibits the potential of the children to become engaged readers. This is the focus of our intervention.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Reading engagement needs to be looked at as a process that evolves over time. Numerous factors influence the extent of reading engagement in the primary grades.

Student attitudes about reading can be influenced by four variables: prior experience with books, social interactions about books, book access, and book choice. When instruction is supported by readily available classroom reading materials, children develop positive reading attitudes. Children's attitudes are also related to home literacy practices occurring before the children ever enter school. The results suggest that schools must involve parents if we are to achieve maximal positive effects (Kush and Marley, 1996).

In order to foster engaged readers, the classroom must be a language rich environment. We also need to give students plenty of time to engage in reading. Students need to experience the intrinsic and social motivation they will get from reading books. If we provide students with daily opportunities to become authors they will experience intrinsic and social motivation that can be found in writing their own stories. Another key component in a language rich environment is a classroom library or reading

center. A successful classroom library is inviting and organized for easy use. Not only do we need to provide students with role models to emulate, we need to help students take responsibility for their own learning (Winograd & Gaskins, 1992).

The home-school partnership is one that begins long before a child enters school. Each parent has had school experiences that are reflected in the attitudes they pass on to their children about the importance of school. According to Mavis Sanders, Farring School in Baltimore attributes its success to an Action Team. This School-Family-Community Partnership team consists of a committee of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Workshops introduce families to an interactive homework process that increases the involvement of families in their children's schoolwork. Newsletters are sent out monthly to families who cannot attend the meetings. These newsletters keep families informed of methodology to use in working with their children on their homework. Families who cannot come to school to volunteer can participate at home. Some examples of what parents can do to volunteer at the school include buying needed school supplies or making school buttons. Through documentation, it was discovered that there was an increase in parent involvement which benefited faculty, students, and families (Sanders, 1996).

Sanders noted that increased volunteerism had benefited the faculty, students, and families at Farring School. A number of parents who started becoming more involved have used this as a catalyst to enroll in the schools General Equivalency Diploma program and a few have even entered college.

This increased involvement has also opened the lines of communication between parents and teachers. Parents understand more of what the teachers are experiencing

and teachers know that the parents care and are willing to work for their child and their school. Increased involvement, according to the action team, has also improved students' attitudes.

Another key to getting students engaged in their reading is to get them motivated. Maher's view (as sited in Winograd & Gaskins, 1992) looks at motivation in four categories: ego, extrinsic, intrinsic, and social. Ego goals are satisfied when one outperforms another. Extrinsic goals are achieved when one receives a symbolic award. Working towards an "A", or a star at the top of the paper would be extrinsic goals. Intrinsic goals are the sheer enjoyment obtained by doing an activity itself. Social goals involve developing a relationship with someone as a result of the activity. The relationship may be with a friend, a teacher, or a parent. Social goals give the student a sense of belonging, a feeling of attachment, and a sense of community (Winograd & Gaskins,1992).

Other researchers, Ann Sweet and John Gutherie, say there are eight distinct motivators for literacy: involvement, curiosity, challenge, social interaction, compliance, recognition, competition, and work avoidance. Challenge refers to the desire to figure out a complex plot or learn something new about a topic. Social interaction occurs when other people are involved in the reading process, making it a collaborative event. Compliance is a forced motivation because the reader is told to do it. This occurs when the activity is looked upon as a requirement. Recognition refers to the desire to be publicly noticed for completing a task. Competition arises when one feels a desire to be the best at a task and demonstrate superiority. Last, but not least is work avoidance. Work avoidance occurs when someone chooses to complete one task in order to avoid

another (Guthrie & Sweet, 1996).

Both of these views on motivation can be related. Each of Guthrie and Sweet's categories can fit into Maehr's four categories. Both approaches feel that motivation that focuses on internal feelings is more productive in the long term than those that result in external rewards.

Quite often, students are treated as if they all learn in the same way. Recent cognitive research now documents that children learn in different ways due to the fact that they possess different types of intelligence strengths.

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences allows educators to explore the different ways children may understand the world and express themselves: linguistic; spatial; musical; logical-mathematical; body-kinesthetic and two types of social intelligence, interpersonal (knowledge of others) and intrapersonal (knowledge of self). The exciting part of this theory is that every person has all seven of these intelligences, and Gardner is looking at expanding his list. The frustrating part is that these seven intelligences are not all equally developed. It is hoped that if one approaches teaching in seven different ways at various times, each child's strengths will be acknowledged and underdeveloped strengths may be allowed to grow (Gardner, 1982). In Forward, the Wisconsin Journal for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Barbara Kopak-Hill describes teaching and learning with multiple intelligences; "While we have not yet completed our project, we realize that ours is a journey, not a destination."(1993, p. 23). Hopefully, all of our teaching takes children on a wonderful journey that never ends.

As children are introduced to new materials, they will thrive or not depending on how they experience the materials. Some need to hear the material, some need to

manipulate or feel the material. Some need visual representation. If a good match is made between the method of delivery and the child's learning style, optimum educational experiences can result.

It is hoped that using the theory of multiple intelligences will lead to:

1. Inclusion of all students when studying a given subject area.
2. Elimination of ability-grouped students.
3. A better way to understand the total child, both strengths and weaknesses.
4. The opportunity for each child to excel in at least one intelligence area.
5. Students who understand and can apply what they have learned.

The value of fairy tales to a young child's overall development cannot be underestimated. Fairy tales respond to many of the characteristics that children possess at an early age: curiosity, imagination, the need for stability, impatience, and a love of ongoing activity. The literature impacts the children in a positive way when learning to deal with life's stresses.

Fairy tales tend to have brief plots that are full of action and easily told. The behavior of the characters is generally predictable; they are one-dimensional; the virtuous characters remain such. The themes in fairy tales consistently portray good over evil. If one breaks rules, he suffers. Many times characters overcome great odds to meet their goals. At the end of the stories, most characters are happy, and their happiness is long-lasting. In hearing these stories, it is comforting for children to know that they can expect a happy ending.

One cannot ignore the issue of violence and obvious cruelty in some of the

traditional fairy tales. Ellen M. Burke, in Literature for the Young Child, states that "...children are likely to meet cruelty and violence in their lives and they need to see them 'righted' with perseverance and courage as in fairy tales."(1990, p 183) When fairy tales can be shared with an adult who the child trusts, in a calm and sheltered environment, most often they are not troubled by the violence. While it is evident that fantasy is necessary in all stages of life, many educators agree that a child's years for fairy tales and fantasy peak between the ages of six and eight (Favat, 1977, Baker, 1981).

Fairy tales arise out of the traditions and common culture of our society. Many of the facts that we teach to children have a common cultural base. Fairy tales provide a basis for much of the literature that is presented to children later on in their education. References to fairy tales abound in our day-to-day speech. " We put students at a distinct disadvantage if we do not expose them to these stories" (Edigner, 1995, p. 17). Fairy tales stimulate the imagination and encourage creativity in our children. Sharing them is beneficial for developing both critical and creative thinking. These stories demonstrate to the youngest of children the commonalties we all share.

It is imperative both educationally and socially that we learn how to teach the lower one-third of our students to read well. If we cannot, the United States will face an escalating battle both economically and socially. Carbo stated in 1996:

> We must motivate and challenge these students, but at the same time make learning to read as easy and risk-free as possible. Our reading instruction must be so powerfully effective that it reaches to the intelligence and learning capacity these youngsters have. (p. 13)

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of parent/student reading partnerships, during the period of September 1997 to January 1998, the targeted first grade students will demonstrate an observable increase in reading engagement, as measured by student surveys and teacher checklists.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary.

1. The classroom libraries will be modified to better meet the students' needs.
2. A reading partnership between adult and student will be fostered through parent training as well as parent/teacher communication.
3. A series of learning activities, that require and facilitate the reading process, will be developed and implemented to motivate students to become more engaged readers.

Project Action Plan

The following action plan will describe how the process will be implemented.

The library in each classroom will be enhanced in order to meet the needs of the students. The library materials will address a wide variety of interests and genre. This will encourage students to choose books they are interested in reading, hence encouraging engagement in the reading materials. The library will be available throughout the duration of the project for in-class reading, as well as reading at home, for those students who do not have an adequate access to books at home or the public library.

The students will be trained on the proper care of books when they are introduced to the classroom library. This will foster an appreciation for the books. This

training will include: care when transporting books, storing books, and reading books. Re-training will occur as needed throughout the project implementation.

Parent training and communication are important components of fostering reading engagement with children. An introductory letter will be sent home to parents at the beginning of the school year describing the program and the role of the parents. Weekly newsletters will be sent home updating parents with tips on how to work with their child and information about activity packets. (Appendix D) Students will be transporting reading logs weekly with parent reflections on how things are going. This will complete the communication cycle.

Activity packets will be designed for the children to take home and work on with parents or another adult. The activities included will require and facilitate the reading process. The activities will be generated using a multiple intelligences approach to engage a wide variety of learners. The packets will be sent home on Fridays, and will be due back the following Friday. (Appendix E)

Packets will include but are not limited to:

-Simple cooking activities

-Games to be played together

-Word puzzles and games

-Problem solving activities

-Songs to learn

-Art activities

-Stories to read aloud

Each child will be given a cloth bag to transport their library books and activity packets between home and school. The children will personalize the book bags and decorate them each time they complete an activity packet or read a book.

A student reading sheet will be provided for children on which they can record a response to the classroom library books as they are read. Space will be provided in the log book for parent questions or comments. The activity packets and reading sheets will be sent home for six consecutive weeks.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

Our research project was designed to increase reading engagement in first grade readers. In order to accomplish this purpose we: modified classroom libraries, developed and implemented a series of reading activities to foster a reading partnership between student and parent, and created informational parent letters.

Classroom libraries were developed at each of the individual sites. One of the teachers used books already existing in her classroom to organize a library that students could access without restrictions. The other two teachers used personal funds to develop classroom libraries. Once the libraries were in place, students were instructed about appropriate handling practice for library materials:

- wash hands before handling books
- use proper page turning technique
- use bookmarks
- protect books from the weather
- practice proper storage of books

To encourage these practices, each child was given a canvas bag to transport their

library books between school and home. The students also took home activity packets, including parent informational letters.

The activity packets were developed based on six fairy tales and incorporated the use of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Packet A <u>The Little Red Hen</u>

1. Reading
2. Sign Language
3. Self Reflection
4. Graphing
5. Working in a Group
6. Art
7. Planting

Packet B <u>The Three Bears</u>

1. How I Feel
2. Bedroom Map
3. Let's Pretend
4. Off to Dreamland
5. The Bear Facts
6. Songs to Share
7. Three Bears Game

Packet C <u>The Gingerbread Kid</u>

1. Reading
2. Coloring/Sequencing

3. Retelling
4. Art
5. Reading/Drama
6. Singing
7. Cooking

Packet D <u>The Three Billy Goats Gruff</u>

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Comprehension
4. Oral Language
5. Vocabulary
6. Art
7. Creative Writing

Packet E <u>Little Red Riding Hood</u>

1. Rhymes with Red
2. Proud Medal
3. Colorful Feelings
4. A Basket of Goodies for Grandma
5. Sequence Cards
6. Drop Race
7. Songs

Packet F <u>The Three Little Pigs</u>

1. Reading

2. Character Analysis
3. Oral Language
4. Story Retell
5. Art
6. Comprehension
7. Writing
8. Math

The packets were sent home on a weekly basis. They were designed to be worked on with a parent or other adult in the student's household.

A set of parent information letters was sent home with the activity packets. The purpose of the letters was to provide parents with information about current educational practices. The first letter welcomed the parents and introduced the activity-based program. It also provided procedures to the parents for returning the packets. The letter stressed the importance of the school-parent-child cooperation.

The second letter emphasized the importance of children reading to their parents and other members of their families. Suggestions were given to create a non-threatening reading environment. This encourages children to look at reading as a positive experience.

The family/school connection was encouraged in the third letter. It explained various ways parents can be involved in their child's education. The family/school partnership encourages successful learning experiences.

The fourth letter discussed motivation. The goal when educating children is to develop a desire to learn more and motivate students to pick up a book. The four

categories of motivation were defined: ego, extrinsic, social, and intrinsic. In order to develop a lifelong love of learning, the social and intrinsic motivations need to be stressed.

The fifth letter introduced parents to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. This theory focuses on the belief that everyone has more than one intelligence strength. The letter contained an informal checklist for parents to do at home with their child to reveal how their child learns best.

The final letter covered problem solving techniques. The goal was to create a "thought-full" home by having parents be listeners and thought generators. The letter described suggestions for doing this.

In order to bring closure to the intervention, each class held a painting party to decorate their canvas bags. The students stamped their bags to represent the activity packets they had attempted, with: a hen, a bear, a gingerbread kid, a goat, a house, and a pig. The students also stamped stars on their bags equal to the number of classroom library books they had read. The students enjoyed the activity, and pride was evident in all participants.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of: the learning packets, the expanded libraries, and the parent letters on student reading engagement, the teachers employed the initial Reading Engagement Teacher Checklist for a second time. The results were tabulated and are presented in table 4. The interventions appear to have had a positive effect on student reading engagement. Of particular note is the positive increase in student attitudes toward reading. This included: choosing reading during free time, reading

Table 4
Reading Engagement Teacher Checklist

	Site A		Site B		Site C		Total in %	
	Pre n=21		Pre n=20		Pre n=23		Pre n=64	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Emergent Reading Skills								
A Recognizes speech/print relationship	11	10	16	4	16	7	67.2%	32.8%
B Understands concepts of letter/words	18	3	18	2	17	6	82.8%	17.2%
C Handles books appropriately	15	6	15	5	23	0	82.8%	17.2%
Attitudes Towards Reading								
A Chooses reading during free time	12	9	2	18	11	12	39.1%	60.9%
B Reads many books/stories	11	10	3	17	1	22	23.4%	76.6%
C Listens attentively to stories	14	7	9	11	16	7	60.9%	39.1%
Reading Interests								
A Has favorite books/stories	12	9	9	11	23	0	68.8%	31.3%
B Discusses favorite books/stories	12	9	9	11	2	21	35.9%	64.1%
C Participates in discussions about books/stories	12	9	9	11	19	4	62.5%	37.5%
Reading Skills/Strategies								
A Comprehends what is read	10	11	4	16	23	0	57.8%	42.2%
B Shows confidence as a reader	7	14	5	15	6	17	28.1%	71.9%

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Table 5

Comparison of Pre and Post Students Reading Survey Summary

Questions

1. How do you feel when your teacher reads you a story?
2. How do you feel when your class has reading time?
3. How do you feel when you can read with a friend?
4. How do you feel when you read out loud to a teacher?
5. How do you feel when you read out loud to someone at home?
6. How do you feel when someone reads to you at home?
7. How do you feel when someone gives you a book for a present?
8. How do you feel when you read to yourself at home?
9. How do you think your teacher feels when you read out loud?
10. How do you think your family feels when you read out loud?
11. How do you feel about how well you can read?

	Site A (N=21)						Site B (N=20)						Site C (N=23)						Totals in % (N=64)					
	Pre			Post			Pre			Post			Pre			Post			Pre			Post		
Qust.	H	M	S				H	M	S				H	M	S				H	M	S			
1	19	0	2				19	0	1				19	3	1				89	5	9			
2	15	3	3				9	9	2				13	10	0				58	34	8			
3	18	2	1				16	4	0				21	2	0				86	12	2			
4	14	2	5				10	8	2				13	3	7				58	20	22			
5	12	3	6				14	2	4				20	3	0				72	12	16			
6	19	0	2				19	0	1				20	3	0				92	4	4			
7	21	0	0				17	3	0				19	4	0				89	11	0			
8	17	0	4				16	2	2				15	6	2				74	13	13			
9	9	5	7				11	4	5				19	2	2				61	17	22			
10	14	2	5				16	3	1				18	4	1				75	14	11			
11	20	0	1				19	1	0				19	2	2				90	5	5			

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many books, and listening attentively when read to. The emergent reading skill of handling books appropriately also showed an overall increase.

The students also responded to their initial survey a second time after the intervention took place. These data are presented in table 5. The intervention also appears to have had a positive effect on the students attitude. There is also a noticeable increase in the students perception of a positive reaction from parents and teachers feel when listening to them read orally.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data obtained from teacher checklists and student surveys, the students showed a measurable increase in reading engagement. The opportunity for students to work one-on-one with their parents completing reading activities fostered a love of learning and helped to increase student reading engagement. The students excitedly embraced the new classroom library materials and the opportunity for self-selection of books to take home.

Future research might include a more in-depth look at parental involvement in their child's education. One might continue to consider how to engage parents as well as students in the learning process. It is strongly recommended that the intervention process continue in the future to further enhance reading engagement.

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Appendices

Appendix A

PARENT SURVEY

Parent's Name_____ Fall 1997
Student's Name_____ School _____

Directions: Please describe your child by choosing a number on a scale of 1-5 for each of the following activities below. Use 5 for the highest and 1 for the lowest.

1. What activities does your child like to do out of school?

__sing
__read
__play sports
__watch TV
__other_____
__solve puzzles
__draw or paint
__play alone
__play with other children

2. What are your child's strengths and talents?

__music
__reading
__art
__sports
__math or puzzles
__working alone
__working with others
__other_____

Directions: Please circle the best response.

3. My child enjoys reading.

frequently sometimes never

4. My child chooses to look at a book during free time.

frequently sometimes never

5. Our family uses the public library.

frequently sometimes never

6. I like to read for enjoyment.

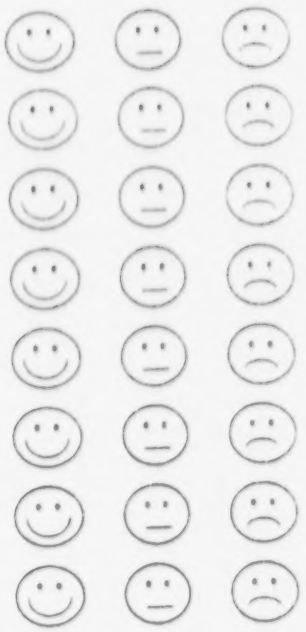
frequently sometimes never

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My name is_____ The date is_____

Primary Reading Survey

How Do You Feel When:



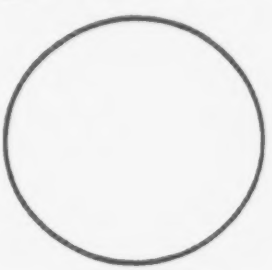
1. your teacher reads a story to you?
2. your class has reading time?
3. you can read with a friend?
4. you read out loud to your teacher?
5. you read out loud to someone at home?
6. someone reads to you at home?
7. someone gives you a book for a present?
8. you read a book to yourself at home?

How Do You Think:

9. your teacher feels when you read out loud?
10. your family feels when you read out loud?

How Do You Feel About How Well You Can Read?

Make this face look the way you feel.



Appendix C

READING ENGAGEMENT TEACHER CHECKLIST

Student's Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

Teacher's Name _____ School _____

Please answer yes or no for each of the following statements.

	YES	NO
Emergent Reading Skills		
Recognizes speech/print relationship	____	____
Understand concepts of letters/words	____	____
Handles books appropriately	____	____
Attitudes Toward Reading		
Chooses reading during free time	____	____
Reads many books/stories	____	____
Listens attentively to stories	____	____
Reading Interests		
Has favorite books/stories	____	____
Discusses favorite books/stories	____	____
Participates in discussion about books/stories	____	____
Reading Skills/Strategies		
Comprehends what is read	____	____
Shows confidence as a reader	____	____

Adapted from: Harcourt Brace Treasury of Literature.

Appendix D

Parent Letters

September 29,1997

Dear Parents,

We need your help! We are starting a new activity-based program that we feel will improve your child's love of reading. With your help the program can be successful.

Your child will be bringing home a packet of activities on a weekly basis. These will be short activities that will take no more than 20 minutes of your time. We are asking you to do one activity per day with your child. These activities will increase your child's academic success in the long run.

In order to keep all the materials organized we are supplying your child with a special bag for their activity packets. Please encourage your child to take care of this bag and return the activity packets with all the activities you were able to complete (accept the cookies) by the following Monday. Please check off the activities you were able to complete, so that we know which ones were the most interesting. This will help us create packets with activities you like in the future.

Please record the books you read with your children on the reading log provided. Then have your child mark how he/she feels about it.

We are looking forward to the success your child will experience from this school-parent-child cooperation. If you have any questions about the program, please call me.

HAVE FUN!!!

Come join the crew...

Dear Parents,

Read to your child. This is one of the most important things you can do. It will encourage your child to love reading. Listen to your child read. When children are learning to read, they want to read aloud to people who are important to them. Encourage your child to read to you and to other members of the family. I know you want your child to be the best reader he/she can be. You will help your child by doing the following:

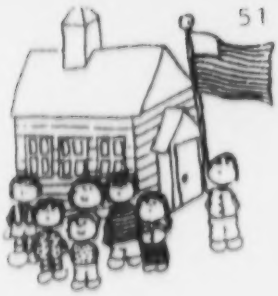
*Read to your child.
*Listen to your child read.
*Have reading materials in your home.
*Provide your child books, games, and puzzles.
*Praise your child.

Ask your child where her/his books are each day when she/he arrives home frorn school.

Our goal for this school year is to get children reading for enjoyment. I appreciate your cooperation in helping your child to become a better reader. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Phelps



Family/School Connection

Dear Parents,

The family/school connection has many parts. We are very familiar with the role of the child/school connection, but the parent/school connection is often unclear. The parent/school connection can not be stressed enough. This connection can be formed with any adult such as: a mother, a father, a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, a neighbor, or even a baby sitter. As your child progresses through school teachers, schools and friends will change. A significant adult is the constant thread that ties it all together.

The more involved parents can be in their child's lives at school, the more meaningful school is to the child. There are a variety of activities that you can partake in to be involved. Schools understand that as working or at home parents time can be scarce for volunteering. For some parents volunteering in the classroom on a weekly basis work best, but for others taking a half day off or getting a sitter or friend to take younger siblings and come in one time for a few hours works better. There also is opportunity to be involved through attending parent teacher organization's meetings, and making an extra effort to attend open houses, parent conferences, class plays, or an occasional field trip.

For those of you who are unable to do these activities, there is still the time you spend with your child at home in the evenings, on weekends, or simply during a trip to the store. This time can be used to ask about school, practice homework, or discuss the happenings in your lives. If you need any ideas on how you might be able to get involved just ask!

Please remember you are a vital part of your child's education!

Motivation

Dear Parents,

What motivates you? Is it the paycheck? Is it the award? Or Is it the feeling of satisfaction in a job well done? Our goal in school is to nurture a child's desire to learn more for the feeling they get, not the letter grade on the top of the paper. A child that learns to read, but does not learn to love it has lost something. As we teach first graders to read we want to motivate them to learn or desire more, not look for the grade at the top of the paper. Will that grade motivate them to pick up another book or research something they are interested in? Probably not, but if we teach them to love reading and learning we have succeeded.

Motivation can be broken down into four categories:

1. **Ego**- Competition or doing better than someone else.
2. **Extrinsic**- Working toward a symbolic award such as an A, stickers, or a star at the top of the paper.
3. **Social**- Developing a relationship with a friend, teacher, or parent. (A parent can also be the friend and teacher.)
4. **Intrinsic**- Completing an activity for the sheer enjoyment obtained by doing it.

We tend to focus our motivation on the ego or extrinsic kinds when in order to encourage a lifelong love of learning we need to stress the social and intrinsic. This can happen by talking with our kids while we help them learn. Keep these ideas in mind when you try to motivate your children at home too!

Thanks for your help!

Dear Parents:

The reading activity packets that your child will be bringing home are based on the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. The idea behind this theory is that every child is smart in different ways, and that no one way is better than another. You may find that your child learns in several ways. Here is a quick look at the 7 **Good Ways to Learn:**

LEARNING WITH WORDS (Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence)

LEARNING WITH NUMBERS AND PATTERNS (Logical/Mathematical Intelligence)

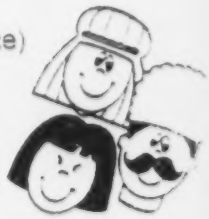
LEARNING WITH SHAPES AND SPACES (Visual/Spatial Intelligence)

LEARNING WITH YOUR BODY AND SENSES (Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence)

LEARNING WITH MUSIC AND RHYTHM (Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence)

LEARNING WITH AND ABOUT OTHERS (Interpersonal Intelligence)

LEARNING ABOUT SELF (Intrapersonal Intelligence)



When children are given a variety of ways to learn, they learn more completely. Please take a few minutes to sit down with your child and go through the attached checklist. This may help to give you a better picture of how your child learns best.

7 GOOD WAYS TO LEARN CHECKLIST

Put a check mark next to the sentences that describe your child.

Learning With Words and Language (Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence)

___ Enjoys sharing ideas by talking or writing.
___ Enjoys words by reading, writing, or talking.
___ Is not shy to speak to others in public.
___ Uses words carefully in sensitive situations.
___ Tells jokes that are appropriate for his/her age.
___ Can convince others of his/her ideas.
___ Knows a lot of words.

Learning With Numbers and Patterns (Logical/Mathematical Intelligence)

___ Can put things in order.
___ Can see a pattern.
___ Can count items easily.
___ Easily solves problems or puzzles.
___ Is good a putting things in groups.
___ Is good at solving difficult problems.

Learning With Shapes and Spaces (Visual/Spatial Intelligence)

___ Can draw or paint things he/she sees easily.
___ Spends a lot of time drawing or doodling.
___ Learns easily when using pictures.
___ Likes to use paint, clay, and other art materials.
___ Likes to solve mazes or work with maps.
___ Enjoys pretending.
___ Can make something by following directions.

Learning With Your Body and Senses (Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence)

___ Enjoys moving around the classroom.
___ Uses hand movement when talking.
___ Is good at sports and games.
___ Is good at using his/her hands to make or fix things.
___ Likes to play games like charades.
___ Likes to show people how to do things.
___ Likes to exercise.

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE OVER.

Learning with Music and Rhythm (Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence)

___ Works well while listening to music.
___ Sings or hums while playing or working.
___ Often taps pencil, feet, or fingers.
___ Easily remembers jingles or tunes from TV or radio ads.
___ Makes up tunes, songs and rhymes.
___ Recognizes sounds in areas other than music.
___ Likes a variety of music.

Learning With and About Others (Interpersonal Intelligence)

___ Likes to spend time with family.
___ Has friends outside of the family.
___ Spends lots of time talking to others.
___ Can get others to talk to him/her.
___ Understands other's feelings.
___ Plays fairly and well in team sports.
___ Seems to be a leader in games and other activities.

Learning About Self

___ Can tell why he/she feels a certain way.
___ Asks many "how" and "why" questions.
___ Enjoys working alone in a quiet place.
___ Can express him/herself in many different ways.
___ Does not worry about what others think about her/him.
___ Understands situations easily.
___ Has good concentration skills.

Dear Parents:

The two skills that today's businesses look for most often in the people they hire are interpersonal skills (the ability to work with and relate to others) and problem solving skills. We work hard with your children to develop these skills. This letter will focus on problem solving: putting what you know and what you can do into action. You children show they are learning when they :

know how to ask questions and get answers.
have the ability to identify and face a problem.
generate ideas that could be solutions.
show that they can make reasonable decisions.

You can help your child to become a good problem solver by providing a "thought-full" home.

First - Ask questions that you really want answers to and that you really care about learning answers to.

Second - Listen to your children's answers, even forcing yourself to listen if you have to.

Third - Let the children know how really smart they are.

Fourth - Let your childrer ask you questions that they want answers to and take the time to respond thoughtfully.

Fifth - Make sure your children listen while you talk. Keep your answers within reasonable time limits and ask them to do the same.

Encourage inventive thinking in your children: Ask how many things could be made from a paper plate, from a rubber band? How could ordinary stairs be improved? Involve your children actively and early in decision making, especially family decision making. Let your children know you care about what they are doing. Help brothers and sisters get along without your being right there to break up fights.

ENJOY TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN!

The Gingerbread Kid
Activity Packet

The Gingerbread Kid Activities

Activity 1 Reading

Enjoy the story The Gingerbread Kid by having an adult or child read the story. You may also pair read by having the child read the words he/she knows and the adult reads the other words.

Activity 2 Coloring/sequencing

Cut out and color the sequence cards. Mix up the cards and then see if your child can arrange the cards in the correct order for the story. Check your child's work by re-reading the story and having your child point to the cards as you go. Your child can then correct any out of order cards without feeling as if they have made a mistake.

Activity 3 Re-telling

Have your child re-tell the story in his/her own words using the picture cards he/she created in activity 2 to help.

Activity 4 Art

Let your child decorate the gingerbread kid pattern provided. Give your child some glue and some decorating materials such as: buttons, ribbon pieces, rickrack, noodles, yarn, or small pieces of fabric. Let the kids go at it and praise the results.

Activity 5 Reading/drama

Let your child pretend to be a gingerbread cookie. Let the whole family join in. Recite the following poem by Jean Warren and let them act out the movements. Then let your child read it and let the adults act it out.

Gingerbread cookies,
Run around.
Gingerbread cookies,
Touch the ground.
Gingerbread cookies,
Around you go.
Gingerbread cookies,
Now--go--slow.

Activity 6 Singing

Sing the following song "Run Run, You Can't Catch Me," by Jean Warren to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

Run, run, you can't catch me,
I run too fast, as you can see.
I outran the farmer, I outran his wife,
I'll outrun you 'cause I run for my life.
Run, run, you can't catch me,
I run too fast; I'm free, I'm free!

Activity 7 Cooking

Gingerbread People

1/2 cup shortening
2 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup molasses
1 egg
1 tablespoon vinegar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon cloves

Powdered Sugar Icing

1 cup sifted powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
milk
Blend sugar and vanilla. Add enough milk to make desired consistency.

In a mixing bowl beat shortening with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add about half the flour and the rest of the ingredients. Beat until thoroughly combined and then add the remaining flour. Cover and chill for 3 hours or until it is easy to handle. Roll dough until 1/4 inch thick. Cut and place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake for 6-8 minutes in a 375 oven. Cool, frost, and decorate.

The Gingerbread Kid

An adaption of "The Gingerbread Boy"
by Jean Warren

Once upon a time there lived a farmer and his wife who had no children.

One day, the farmer's wife was feeling very lonely, so she decided to bake a gingerbread kid.

She mixed some gingerbread dough and then rolled it out gently. Next, she carefully cut out a large gingerbread kid.

She placed it on a cookie sheet, put it into the oven, and waited patiently for it to brown.

When she saw that the gingerbread kid was done, she opened the oven and took it out.

It was perfect. Now she would no longer be lonely.

Then much to her surprise, the gingerbread kid jumped off the cookie sheet and began running around the room.

The farmer's wife was thrilled. It was just like having a real child.

But when she went to pick up the gingerbread kid, it said, "Run, run—you can't catch me! I'm a gingerbread kid. I'm free, I'm free!"

Then the gingerbread kid ran out the door.

The farmer's wife chased after the gingerbread kid, but it was too fast for her. It ran on and on to the field where the farmer was working.

When the farmer tried to catch the gingerbread kid, it said, "Run, run—you can't catch me! I'm a gingerbread kid. I'm free, I'm free!"

The farmer and his wife both chased after the gingerbread kid, but it was too fast for them.

It ran on and on past a cow, a pig, and a hen. They all tried to catch the gingerbread kid, but it was just too fast.

At last, the gingerbread kid came to a pond where it had to stop. "Oh me, oh my," it said. "What shall I do now? I can't get wet."

Just then, out of the bushes stepped a sly fox. "Climb onto my back," he said. "I will give you a ride across the pond."

The gingerbread kid jumped onto the back of the fox.

When they reached the middle of the pond, the fox lowered his back into the water. "Quick," he cried, "climb up onto my big nose! The water is deeper here."

As the gingerbread kid quickly climbed up onto the fox's nose, the fox said, "Yum, yum, look what I caught for me! One gingerbread kid, and it's free, it's free!"

Then in one gulp, he gobbled up the gingerbread kid. And that is the end of this story.

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Activity 2

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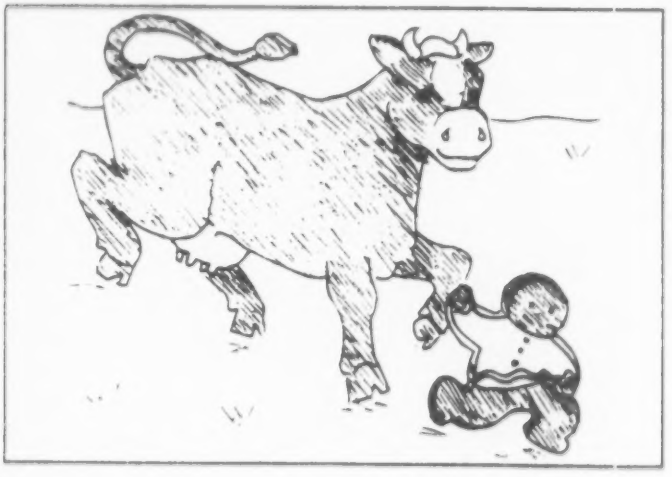

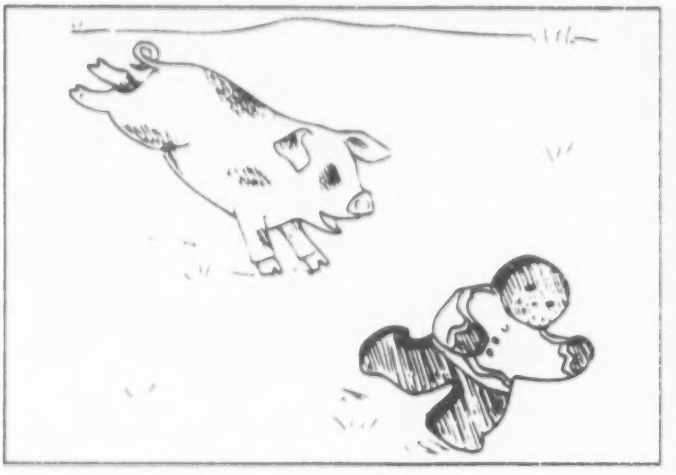

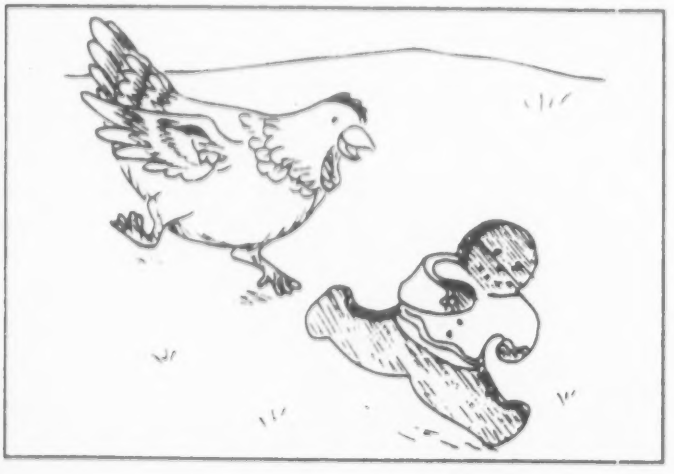

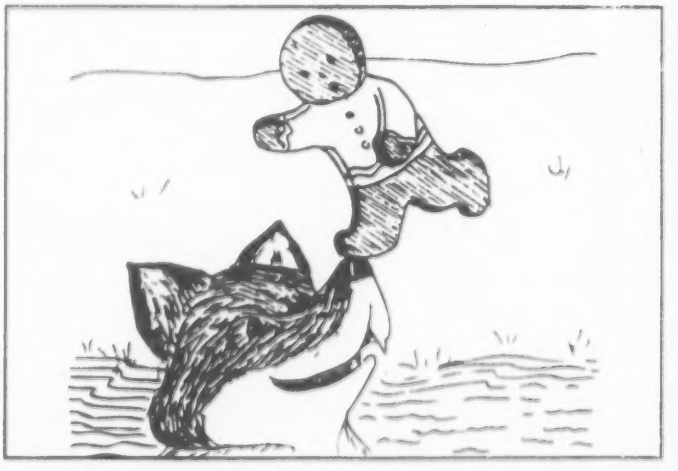

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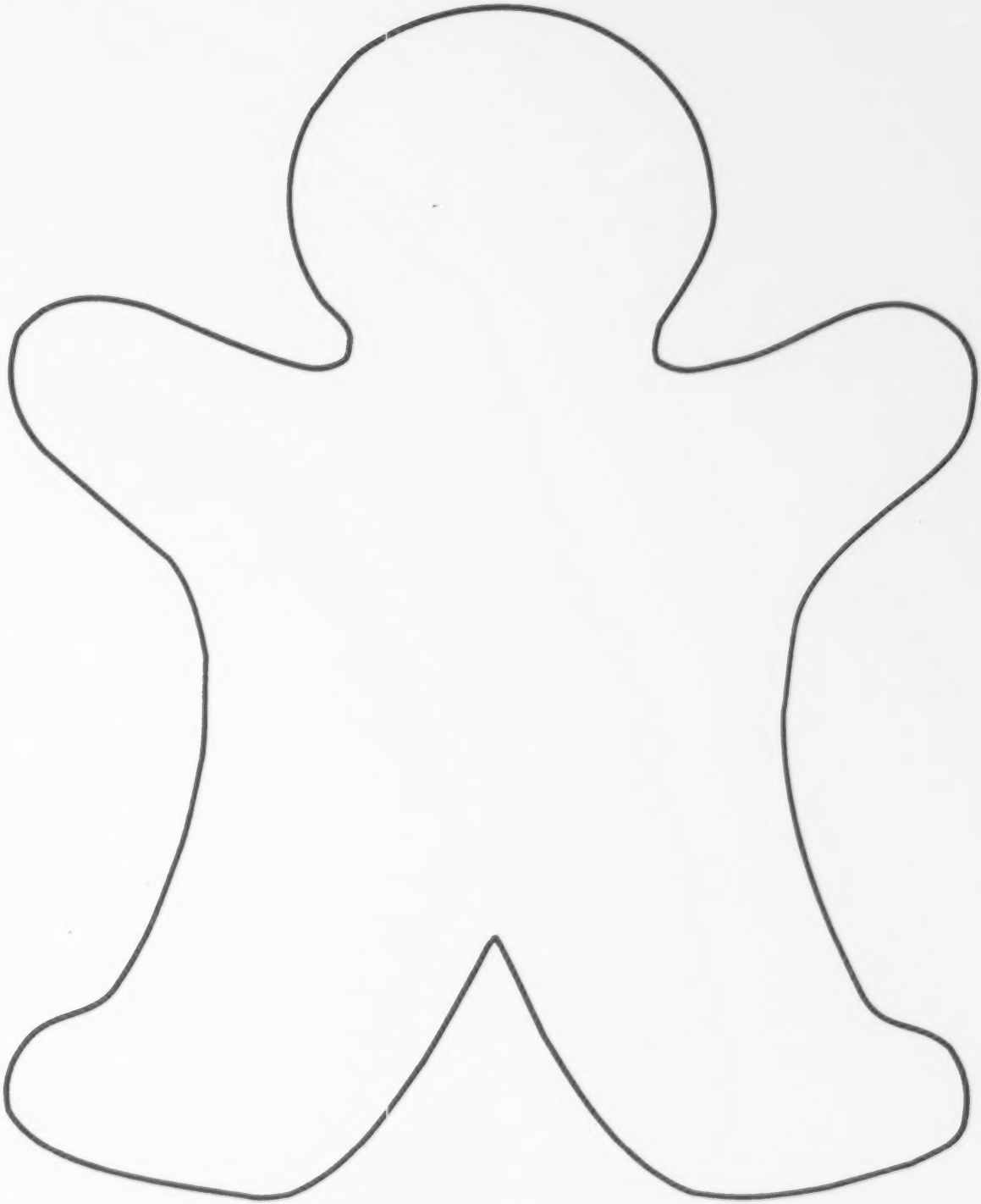
Activity 4

Name _____



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